



Safety Division Readies New Motorcycle Riders Course

Twenty-eight Marines died in motorcycle accidents during fiscal years 2012 and 2013. This tragic and costly loss among the more than 17,000 Marines who ride motorcycles is the impetus behind a new motorcycle safety course – *Riders Essential Skills Training (REST)* – being developed by the Commandant of the Marine Corps' Safety Division. When finalized, REST will become a second required course for Marines who ride their motorcycles on MCICOM installations.

Currently, Marines wanting to operate their motorcycles on base must complete the Marine Corps' Basic Riders Course. But given the number of Marine motorcycle fatalities, it was determined there was not enough emphasis on braking and cornering under normal highway speeds and conditions. Together, steering, particularly around corners, and emergency braking are the leading cause – more than 61 percent – of all motorcycle crashes.

"Riding a motorcycle is dangerous, 30 times more dangerous than driving a car. However, most risk can be mitigated by knowing your environment, knowing your machine, and knowing yourself," says Maj Mark Thompson, Action Officer, Safety Division, MCICOM. "The new, one-day REST course will focus on the rider, specifically the rider's ability to perform the two most important skills - braking and steering at realistic speeds. I am confident that we can achieve a 50-percent reduction in motorcycle accidents by implementing this program."

Thompson, a 10-year motorcycle riding veteran, recently participated with other Marines in the Yamaha Champions Riders School (watch the video: http://youtu.be/Pr_uYE7x15g). Many of the skills he learned in this private, 2-day \$2,500 per person course are being included in what will be the free REST course. REST is expected to begin a pilot program in early 2015 where the training will be further tested and fine-tuned before being implemented and required Corps-wide.



Caption:

Maj Mark Thompson, Action Officer, Marine Corps Safety Division, is an experienced motorcycle rider and has been instrumental in creating the new Riders Essential Skills Training course for Marines.